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FTP technical guide

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Turn your PC into an FTP Server

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You don't have to be MP3.com, PCgamer.com or Winsite.com to utilize FTP server technology. Anyone can run a full-functioning FTP server, even on your home PC. FTP is the fastest, most secure, reliable means of transferring files, so why not take advantage of these features for every file you transfer over the Internet.

Why an FTP Server?

E-mail attachments really don't cut it. With e-mail, you have little control of how long it takes for someone to get your file. There are limits on file size and you're unable to resume downloads that cut-out before they are complete. Running an FTP server on your computer can virtually guarantee that your friends, co-workers, and vendors can get all your files in a timely, secure manner.

Running an FTP server is safe. FTP servers allow you full control over who can login to your computer, which files they can access, and whether or not they're able to upload.

What Do You Need?

To run your own FTP server all you need is a computer with an Internet connection (any Internet connection will do) and FTP server software.

Now there are number of options when choosing FTP server software. Like all Internet software, FTP server software is available at all price ranges. The server that is best for you depends on how often you intend on running your FTP server, how many people you expect to access your FTP server and the amount of money you're willing to spend.

For those people who don't plan on publicizing their FTP sever and/or won't have a constant Internet connection to their FTP server, there are plenty of shareware or freeware FTP servers that would work for you. Go to your favorite download site and pick an FTP server that looks best to you.

For those people looking for a more robust FTP server, we recommend [WS_FTP Server](#) (available free for thirty days). This sister product to WS_FTP Pro runs on Windows and is the ideal choice for

personal use, schools, ISPs or any business organization that needs to share files with an unlimited number of users.

How Do I Do It?

After installing your FTP server client, there are only a few things you need to do to get started.

To begin, you need to decide what kind of logins your users have. If you want to allow everyone to have access to your files, you will want to make sure that your FTP server is setup to allow 'anonymous logins'. This option is the default for most FTP servers and is how browsers and FTP clients first attempt to login to an FTP server.

If you want to grant permissions on an individual basis, then you want to disallow 'anonymous logins' and set-up a login user name and password. Depending on which FTP server you choose, you may also be able to allow access based on an individual's IP address.

Second, you need to know the IP address of your computer so people can connect to your FTP server. There are two way to do this. Some FTP server clients will show you the 'home IP' address in the FTP server setup or in the text display when the server becomes 'on-line'. Look around and you should be able to find it. If you can't, open your DOS Command Prompt and type 'ipconfig' (or 'winipcfg' for older versions of Windows). This command will list your IP address, among other things.

Note: If you use a dial-up Internet connection, your IP address changes with every new Internet connection or dial-up session. You will need to check the IP address every time you login to your ISP. You may have to rerun your FTP setup with every new dial-up session for it to capture your new IP address.

Most FTP servers manage user accounts in a fairly simple way, allowing you to easily change passwords, directory permissions, access limitations and other FTP server functions. You can change these attributes as you get more comfortable with your FTP server.

As long as you have taken care of the login issues and you have your machine's IP address, you're ready to start running your very own FTP server. Keep in mind, in order for people to connect to your FTP server you must be connected to the Internet and your FTP server must be 'running'. You might want to test the server by logging in with WS_FTP before you tell others to connect.

A Few Important Tips:

- **Watch Your Permissions** – Be careful to not give users permissions that they shouldn't have. This is especially important when giving **write** or **delete** permissions. You don't want to end up with a full hard drive or missing files.
- **Control Your Bandwidth** – Make sure you don't allow too many people into your server at once. This could either take bandwidth away from you, or make your users experience slow downloads. Most FTP servers allow you to set send rates as

well.

- **Prohibit Multiple Logins** – If you don't prohibit multiple logins, users will be able to take multiple files at the same time. In most cases, this just slows your server down and takes away from other users.
- **Allow Resuming** – Most FTP servers can allow users to resume broken transfers. This feature is a real blessing to modem users and can really help get big files across slow lines.
- **Keep a Log** – Keep a log of all server activity. This information can help you out in many ways. Logging can help tell you who is coming to your site and what they are doing on it. Again, most FTP server software supports logging.
- **Always Update User Accounts** – Make sure that you remove old accounts and organize new ones. Most FTP server software allows you to classify users in groups.

Anything Else to Know?

Take it easy at first. There are reasonable limitations to FTP server capability depending on your connection to the Internet. Good luck and have fun!

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